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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR SA/FO AMBASSADOR QUINN, S/CT, SA/A  
NSC FOR AHARRIMAN, KAMEND  
CENTCOM FOR POLAD, CG CFC-A, CG CJTF-76  
TREASURY FOR LMCDONALD, WBALDRIDGE, APARAMESWARAN, ABAUKOL  
STATE PLEASE PASS USAID  
USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [KDEM](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: INTIMIDATION FORCES VILLAGERS TO INCREASINGLY  
REJECT AID IN KANDAHAR

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Local NGOs in Kandahar report increased intimidation by anti-coalition forces. This, compounded by continuing corruption, creates an extremely difficult environment for aid organizations. Villagers are asking NGOs not to return. Corrupt officials are impeding their work in other areas. In a meeting with the Ambassador on November 15 in Kandahar, NGOs asked for international help to push back against this intimidation and recommended the increased use of locally based NGOs. END SUMMARY.

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Intimidation Spreads  
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2. (SBU) Leaders of local NGOs told the Ambassador that villages throughout Kandahar are declining aid for fear of retaliation by anti-coalition militia forces. This is not a new problem, but they report the areas affected appear to be growing significantly. One NGO representative alleged that only fifteen minutes outside of Kandahar City, Afghans were being threatened with violence if they cooperated with aid organizations. This worsening of the security situation could hinder the GOA and the international community in carrying out reconstruction projects in rural areas, thus posing a greater threat to our reconstruction efforts than isolated IED attacks.

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Continuing Corruption  
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3. (SBU) Corruption and poor governance are also serious problem in Kandahar. Both Kandahar's governor and local NGOs complained about the lack of effective governance in Kandahar province, describing pervasive problems with district officials. For example, when one NGO asked for permission to dig an irrigation system, the district leader responded in a blatantly tribalist manner, saying they could only work in an area surrounding his tribe. The Governor himself admitted that an ineffective district police chief, whom he dismissed, did not have a basic understanding of his duties. NGOs reported an increasing gap between the government and the people and they requested that the international community speak out with one voice against government appointment of corrupt officials.

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Comment  
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4. (SBU) The deteriorating operational security environment for NGOs in Kandahar poses another impediment to reconstruction. The intimidation of aid recipients needs to be addressed through both increased security measures and greater use of NGOs that utilize locally based staff. Embassy is exploring a pilot project along these lines in Kandahar. Security is also getting further study.  
NEUMANN